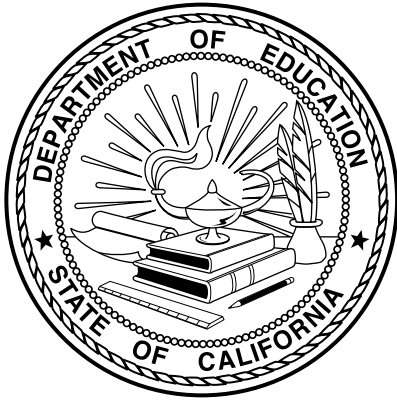

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program



Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2007 STAR Program Tests

Resources for Use by School District and School Staff

- Newsletter Inserts
- Sample Letters
- Letter Attachments
- Glossary of Terms

March 2007

Prepared by the
California Department of Education

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Purpose

School districts and schools distribute a variety of school-home newsletters, mailings, and other notifications to parents and guardians throughout the year. The purpose of this written information is to keep parents and guardians informed about their students' educational programs, local efforts to improve students' academic achievements, and state/federal requirements in order to provide support to ensure all students achieve state content standards in core subject areas.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2007 STAR Program Tests: Resources for Use by School District and School Staff is designed for use by school district and school administrators as they work with staff and parent leaders to prepare these parent newsletters and special mailings.

Uses of Information and Materials

Assistance material in this packet includes a series of school/home newsletter inserts that focus on the 2007 STAR Program tests, who takes them, and results of these tests and how results are used. In addition, there are sample letters for parents and guardians with attachments. The "Resources for Use by School District and School Staff—Chart 1" on page 5 describes each of the documents in this packet, available electronic formats, language versions, and some suggested uses. The "Resources for Use by School District and School Staff—Chart 2" on page 6 refers to documents provided in *Guides for 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for Parents and Guardians*, which can be used with this packet. A third packet, *Understanding 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for School District and School Staff*, also provides information about the 2007 STAR Program to help local administrators work with teachers and support staff to prepare them for their roles as key communicators. A "Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms for Assessment and Accountability" also is provided at the end of each packet. All three packets are posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Special Focus Areas

Some material in this packet provides newsletter inserts and sample letters that are designed for communicating with parents and guardians of English learners and students with disabilities. This material with page references is listed in the table of contents. The charts on pages 5 and 6 show which material is available in Spanish as well as English.

Resources for Use by School District and School Staff — Chart 1

This packet offers a variety of material that is designed to help school district administrators as they work with staff and parent leaders to prepare newsletters and special mailings to parents and guardians about the STAR Program. Suggestions for using this material is outlined in the following chart:

Document	Description	Suggested Uses
Spotlight on STAR 2007 (Series of articles for school/home newsletters) Available Formats: English and Spanish versions	Series of seven articles that describe the STAR Program and provide answers to many of the questions asked by parents and guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include inserts (or sections of the inserts) in separate district or school newsletters or combine topics, as appropriate.* ■ Use inserts in student newspapers at appropriate grades. ■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (e.g., lunch menus, weekly home packets, PTA communications). ■ Post copies in the main school office or on bulletin boards. ■ Post copies on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve for parents and guardians.
Sample Administrator's Letters Before STAR Program Testing Begins (Series of letters to parents and guardians) Available Formats: Text file English and Spanish versions	Three sample letters that can be used by school district or school administrators to notify parents and guardians of the STAR Program tests and testing schedule, focusing on all students, English learners, or students taking the CAPA (This text is in Microsoft Word so it can be modified for local use.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute in special mailings to parents and guardians just prior to STAR Program testing.
STAR 2007 Program-at-a-Glance Available Formats: English and Spanish versions	Three charts that outline key features of each STAR Program test. The charts target three school levels (elementary, middle, and high).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attach the appropriate Program-at-a-Glance chart to the letter to parents and guardians to provide clear and concise information about the STAR Program tests.

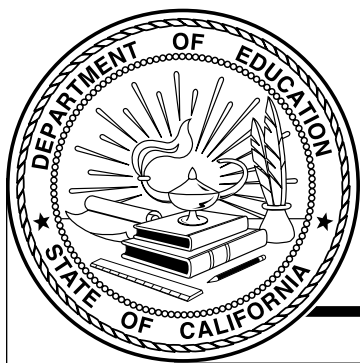
- Insert test administration dates and other local information where indicated. Be sure to cover up the page number in the upper right-hand corner of each Spotlight before making copies.

Resources for Use by School District and School Staff — Chart 2*

The material identified in the chart below is found in *Guides for 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for Parents and Guardians* that is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. Although the primary purpose of this packet is to provide parents and guardians with direct access to information about the 2007 STAR Program, it also can be used by school district and school staff in a number of ways.

Document	Description	Suggested Uses
Parent and Guardian Guides and Brochure Available Formats: Text file English and Spanish versions	Five guides that provide answers to questions frequently asked by parents and guardians in a brief and user-friendly format about the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2007 STAR Program ■ California Standards Tests ■ California Writing Standards Tests ■ STAR Program Tests for English Learners ■ California Alternate Performance Assessment A separate brochure highlights suggestions for parents and guardians for helping their students achieve in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Insert in the school/home newsletter. ■ Attach to a principal letter to parents and guardians. ■ Distribute copies at parent/guardian workshops and meetings. ■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (i.e., lunch menus, weekly home packets, PTA communications). ■ Post copies on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve to parents and guardians.
Accessing the STAR Program Web Site Available Formats: English version	Step-by-step instructions for accessing the CDE's STAR Program Web site at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inform parents and guardians of the availability of this assistance and where it is located. ■ Share this information with school district and school staff to facilitate their use of the STAR Program Web site.
Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms for Assessment and Accountability Available Formats: English and Spanish versions	Glossary of acronyms with a brief description of terms related to state and federal assessment and accountability (These acronyms are frequently used in documents prepared by the CDE for use by the field.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inform parents and guardians of the availability of this assistance and where it is located. ■ Share this information with school district and school staff to facilitate their use of the STAR Program Web site.

* The documents listed in this chart are in the *Guides for 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for Parents and Guardians*



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

What Is the STAR Program and When Does It Happen?

Students at our school will participate again this spring in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The STAR Program, which is authorized by state law until 2011, is an important part of the California assessment system.

The purpose of the STAR Program is to measure how well students are learning the knowledge and skills identified in the California content standards. The content standards describe what students at each grade level should know and be able to do in English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science.

Students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program in the spring of each year. Most students take the California Standards Tests (CSTs). Students in grades three and seven also take the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) along with the CSTs. Students with significant

cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications, participate in the STAR Program by taking the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The CSTs, CAT/6 Survey, and CAPA are given in English.

In addition to taking the CSTs and CAT/6 Survey, all Spanish-speaking English learners, who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months or who receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), must take the designated primary language test (DPLT) that is administered in Spanish. In spring 2007, students eligible for the DPLT will be administered the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) in grades two, three, and four and the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3) in grades five through eleven.

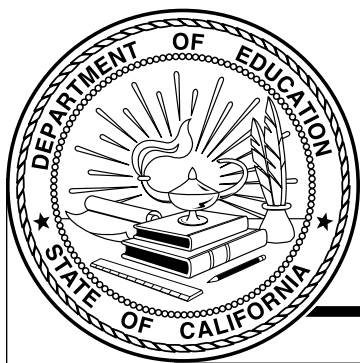
What Is the STAR Program and When Does It Happen?

The STAR Program includes the following tests that students at our school will take on the dates listed:

School District Testing Dates	School District Makeup Dates	2007 STAR Program Tests
		California Standards Tests (CSTs) California Writing Standards Tests* California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

If you have any questions about the state content standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or the school office.

*These writing tests are part of CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

Why Is There More Than One Test?

The California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program includes five test components that provide different information for different purposes. The following tests are for 2007:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs)
- California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)
- Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

CSTs – Aligned to State Standards

Most students take the CSTs that are given in English to show how well students are doing with respect to the California content standards. These content standards, approved by the State Board of Education, describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Students in grades two through eleven are tested in English-language

arts and mathematics. Students in grades five and eight through eleven also take science tests, and students in grades eight through eleven also are tested in history-social science.

CAT/6 Survey – Compared to Nation

Students in grades three and seven also take the CAT/6 Survey tests that assess the achievement of general academic knowledge in key subjects that are commonly taught in public schools throughout the United States. The CAT/6 Survey tests provide comparisons of the performance of California students to the performance of students in grade three or seven throughout the nation.

CAPA – Assessing Students with Significant Disabilities

The CAPA is taken by students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications. This test assesses how well students

Why Is There More Than One Test?

have achieved selected content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. In spring 2007, questions are being field tested for CAPA science tests that will be given in grades five, eight, and ten in future years.

Designated Primary Language Test For English Learners

A designated primary language test (DPLT), given in Spanish, assesses the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking English learners. In spring 2007, the DPLT includes the STS that are given in grades two, three, and four. The Aprenda 3 is the DPLT given in grades five through eleven.

Monitoring Academic Achievement

Together, the tests in the STAR Program ensure that information about the academic achievement of all students is collected on a regular basis. This information is critical in evaluating the quality of the education provided for California students. In order to ensure that schools have the most complete information possible, all students need to participate in these tests. By having different tests, all students are given the opportunity to participate in the STAR Program.

Different Purposes for Results

The test components that make up the STAR Program provide results that are used for but not limited to the following purposes:

- Provide parents and guardians with information about their student's progress
- Serve as a tool for helping parents, guardians, and teachers work together to improve student learning
- Help school districts and schools identify strengths and areas that need improvement in their educational programs
- Allow the public and policymakers to hold public schools accountable for student learning

STAR Program test results, along with other available information, help school staffs form a more complete picture of students' academic achievement.

If you have any questions about the California content standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your student's teacher(s), counselor, or the school office.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

How Do English Learners Participate in the STAR Program?

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests are administered each spring to measure the academic achievement of all students in grades two through eleven in California public schools. This includes English learners. English learners are students who have not developed the skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English needed to participate in the regular school program.

Assessing English Learners

All English learners in grades two through eleven, regardless of their primary language, are required to take the STAR Program tests administered in English. These tests are the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and, in grades three and seven only, the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey). In addition, Spanish-speaking English learners may be required to take the designated primary language test (DPLT).

Assisting English Learners

The following assistance for English learners is allowed on the CSTs and the CAT/6 Survey:

- Using English-to-primary language translation glossaries or word lists that do not include definitions or formulas and are regularly used in the classroom (This variation is not allowed on the CST in English-language arts nor on the CAT/6 Survey.)
- Having test directions translated for them and asking clarifying questions in the student's primary language
- Being tested separately if this type of assistance is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments

The variations allowed for English learners are listed on the last page of the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

How Do English Learners Participate in the STAR Program?

Primary Language Testing

All English learners in grades two through eleven who meet either of the following criteria must take one of the STAR Program's DPLTs for their grade level (*Education Code* Section 60640):

- All Spanish-speaking English learners who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months
- All Spanish-speaking English learners who receive instruction in Spanish, regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States

The DPLTs given to students in grades two, three, and four are the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS). The *Aprenda*, *La prueba de logros en español*, Tercera edición (*Aprenda 3*) is given to students in grades five through eleven. School districts have the option to administer the DPLT to Spanish-speaking English learners who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for 12 months or longer.

Reporting Test Results

Student reports of results for all tests in the STAR Program, including the STS or *Aprenda 3*, must be distributed to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district receives them. Results of the CSTs, CAT/6 Survey, STS, and *Aprenda 3* should arrive

in most school districts by the end of August. Student reports for the STS and *Aprenda 3* are provided in Spanish.

Using STAR Program Results

Results of the CST in English-language arts, given in English, are used to see how well English learners are achieving basic skills in English. These results also are used as one of the criteria for determining if an English learner is ready to be reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP).

Results of the DPLTs provide information that may be used with other achievement data to identify Spanish-speaking English learners' academic strengths and areas that need improvement.

STAR Program test results are one source of information about the progress English learners are making in school. Teachers, parents, or guardians should also review grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom, school district, and state tests for a more complete picture of each student's academic progress.

If you have any questions about the California content standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or the school office.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

How Do Students with Disabilities Participate in the STAR Program?

In order to meet the federal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, all students must participate in the STAR Program tests, including students with disabilities.

Most students with disabilities take the STAR Program's California Standards Tests (CSTs) under standard conditions. Some of these students may need special assistance when taking the tests. The purpose of the assistance provided to students with disabilities is to enable these students to take the tests. The assistance is **not** intended to give these students an advantage over other students or to improve their scores. Special assistance provided to students with disabilities is organized into the following categories:

Test Variations (1)

Students with disabilities may have test variations if they are regularly used in the

classroom. For example, students may be tested separately, have special lighting or adaptive furniture, or use magnifying equipment.

Accommodations (2)

Students with disabilities shall be permitted to take the test with accommodations if the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan specifies their use on the CSTs and other standardized tests or during classroom instruction and assessment. Accommodations change the way the test is given but do not change the content or skills tested. Examples of accommodations include using large-print or Braille versions of the tests or providing more than one day for a test designed for a single sitting.

Modifications (3)

Eligible students shall be permitted to take the tests with modifications if the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan specifies their use on the CSTs and other standardized tests or during classroom instruction and assessment. Modifications fundamentally change what is being tested. Examples

How Do Students with Disabilities Participate in the STAR Program?

of modifications include an examiner reading the reading test to the student or a student using a calculator to perform computations on the mathematics test.

The *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments* provides a complete list of the variations, accommodations, and modifications that are allowed for the tests in the STAR Program. This matrix is posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

California Alternate Performance Assessment

Some students with significant cognitive disabilities are not able to take the CSTs even with accommodations and modifications. These students participate in the STAR Program by taking the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The student's individualized education program (IEP) team determines if he or she takes the CAPA. More information about the CAPA is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capa.asp>.

If you have any questions about the STAR Program, the CAPA, or the types of assistance allowed for students with disabilities, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or IEP team.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

What Types of Questions Are on the STAR Program Tests?

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests contain multiple-choice questions, writing tasks, or performance tasks as shown in the following listing:

- Multiple-Choice Questions
 - California Standards Tests (CSTs)
 - California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)
 - Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)
 - Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)
- Writing Tasks
 - CSTs in English-language arts (grades four and seven only)
- Performance Tasks
 - California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)

Multiple-Choice Questions

Most of the questions in the tests included in the STAR Program are presented in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four or five possible choices. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

Writing Tasks

For the CST in English-language arts, students in grades four and seven answer multiple-choice questions and write an essay in response to a writing task (prompt).

- Students in grade four may be asked to write a narrative (story), a response to literature, or a summary of a reading passage.
- Students in grade seven may be asked to write a fictional narrative (story), a response to literature, a persuasive letter or essay, or a summary of a reading passage.

What Types of Questions Are on the STAR Program Tests?

- Trained readers score each student's essay, and the essay score is combined with the score from the multiple-choice questions to produce the student's overall score for the CST in English-language arts.

State Content Standards

The multiple-choice questions for the CSTs and STS, as well as the writing task for the CST in English-language arts in grades four and seven, are based on the California content standards and tried out on students throughout the state prior to their use on the tests. The CST and STS blueprints identify the specific content standards tested. These blueprints are available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/blueprints.asp>.

Performance Tasks

Only students taking the CAPA respond to performance tasks, which are based on specific state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. These performance tasks are tried out throughout the state prior to their use in the tests. A specially trained examiner individually administers the CAPA by directing the student to respond to questions and perform tasks. This examiner then observes and records the student's responses to the questions and tasks.

Security for Fairness

For security reasons, parents and guardians cannot see the tests in the STAR Program. Only students see the test questions when they take the tests. These security measures ensure that the tests are fair for all students and that test questions can be used for more than one year. Parents and guardians can review CST questions released from previous test administrations at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

If you have any questions about the STAR Program or the California content standards, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or the school office.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

What Kinds of Score Reports Will Parents and Guardians Receive?

All parents and guardians of students who participate in the STAR Program will receive at least one score report that shows how well their students are meeting the state content standards for each subject area tested. The school district sends the STAR Student Reports (by mail) to each student's home within 20 working days after the school district receives the reports. This mailing date may be different for each school district; however, parents and guardians should receive their student's results no later than the end of September 2007. Results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and the student's teacher.

Separate Reports Provided

Parents and guardians receive California Standards Test (CST) results in the STAR Student Report. For students in grades three and seven, test results for the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey), are included on the same report. For students who took the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), results are sent in a separate STAR Student Report.

Parents and guardians of students who take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) or

the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3), also receive a separate report of results.

STAR Student Report (CST and CAT/6 Survey)

The STAR Student Report provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and content-area results for each subject area tested by a CST. Overall scores are reported on a scale ranging from 150 to 600. The CST results for each subject area tested also are reported by performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic. Each performance level indicates how well a student is achieving the state content standards tested. The state target is for all students to score at the proficient or advanced level on the CSTs.

In addition, all CST results are reported by content areas that describe how a student performs on clusters of standards within each subject area. For example, the six content areas used to report the CST in English-language arts results are (1) Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development; (2) Reading Comprehension; (3) Literary Response and

What Kinds of Score Reports Will Parents and Guardians Receive?

Analysis; (4) Written Conventions; (5) Writing Strategies; and (6) Writing Applications.

Content-area results are reported as percent-correct scores and in a graphic that compares an individual student's performance to that of students throughout California scoring proficient on the CST for that subject area. There are no performance levels assigned to the content-area percent-correct scores.

California Reading List (CRL) Number.

Ranging from 01 to 13+, the CRL number links the student score on the CST in English-language arts with a list of books at an appropriate difficulty level for the student. The list is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>.

CAT/6 Survey Scores. For students in grades three and seven, the CAT/6 Survey scores for each subject area tested are reported as percentile ranks. The 50th percentile rank is the national average, and a score between the 40th and 60th percentiles is considered an average score. If a student scores at the 55th percentile, for example, this means the student scored as well as, or better than, 55 percent of the students in a national sample who took the same test in the same grade at about the same time of the year.

Students with Disabilities. Reports for students with disabilities who use modifications

when taking the CSTs or CAT/6 Survey tests will note that the student was tested with modifications.

STAR Student Report (CAPA)

The STAR Student Report for CAPA provides overall scale scores and performance-level results for English-language arts and mathematics. Overall results for the CAPA are reported on a scale ranging from 15 to 60. Results also are reported by performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic. Descriptions of the CAPA performance levels are provided on the student report. These descriptions vary according to the level of the CAPA administered to the student.

Primary Language Test Reports

The STS student report will provide results that describe how well students achieved identified state content standards for reading-language arts and mathematics. The STS report will provide percent-correct scores for each subject area in 2007. The Appendix 3 student report will display student scores as percentile ranks for each subject area tested (i.e., reading, mathematics, language, and spelling). This test compares the scores of Spanish-speaking English learners to the scores of a national sample of Spanish-speaking students at the same grade level who took the tests.

If you have any questions about the California content standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or the school office.



Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

How Are STAR Program Results Used?

The tests in the STAR Program provide results that are used for the following major purposes:

- Communicating with parents and guardians
- Monitoring student achievement
- Evaluating school programs
- Providing data for state and federal accountability programs for school districts and schools.

STAR Program results are confidential and are shared only with the parents or guardians and the student's teacher.

Parent and Guardian Communications

Results for tests in the STAR Program provide parents or guardians with information about their student's academic progress. Along with student report cards and information from school and classroom tests, results on STAR student reports can be used by parents or guardians to talk with teachers about ways to improve their student's achievement of the

California content standards. Differences between report card grades and results on STAR student reports also should be discussed.

Monitoring Student Achievement

Individual STAR Program results, along with other school and school district reports and teacher information, are used to monitor student achievement for a variety of purposes. For example, individual results are used to determine eligibility for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma and passage of the California State University's Early Assessment Program tests. In addition, California English-Language Arts Standards Test results may be used as one of the criteria for determining if an English learner is ready to be reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP).

Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a student's education.

Spotlight on STAR 2007

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

How Are STAR Program Results Used?

Evaluating Programs

Each year, school district and school staffs thoroughly review test results for groups of students by grade level and subject area to identify program strengths and weaknesses. Findings of this review are used to help determine:

- The extent to which students are learning state content standards.
- Instructional areas that can be improved to promote better student achievement.
- Teaching strategies that can be developed to address the learning needs of students.

Accountability

STAR Program test results are used for state and federal accountability programs that monitor the progress of each school district and school toward achieving established goals.

Results are used to calculate each school's Academic Performance Index (API), a major component of the state's Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA). The API is used to rank the academic performance of schools, compare schools with similar characteristics (e.g., size and ethnic makeup), identify low-performing and high-priority schools, and set yearly targets for academic improvement.

Results also are used to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 that requires all school districts and schools to meet specific academic goals. The progress of school districts and schools toward achieving these goals is provided annually in an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. Each year, California school districts and schools must meet AYP goals by showing that a certain percentage of students, districtwide and at each school, are performing at or above the proficient level on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English-language arts and mathematics and the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). At the high school level, the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) results for students in grade ten are used in place of the CSTs to make the decisions about whether a school district or school is meeting its AYP goals.

Clearly, the information provided on different STAR Program reports is very important for school districts and school administrators, teachers, and parents or guardians. By having more than one test, the STAR Program is able to provide the results that are needed for these different purposes.

If you have any questions about the California content standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your student's teacher, counselor, or the school office.

Sample Administrator's Letter Before STAR Program Testing Begins For All Students

Dear Parents or Guardians:

This spring, your student, along with public school students throughout California, will take in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. All students in grades two through eleven will take the California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests measure how well students are achieving California content standards for each subject area tested. Students in grades three and seven also will take the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) at the same time. Results from the CAT/6 Survey compare the general academic knowledge of California's students with students throughout the nation. In addition, students in grades four and seven will take the California Writing Standards Test as part of the CST in English-language arts.

The following Spanish-speaking English learners also will take a designated primary language test in Spanish:

- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months or
- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States).

Students in grades two, three, and four who are eligible for primary language testing will be given the Standards-based Tests (STS) in Spanish. Students in grades five through eleven will take the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3). English learners who speak a primary language other than Spanish will not participate in a primary language test.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs will take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). This test is based on selected state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics.

Results of the STAR Program tests provide valuable information about the academic achievement of all students. It is important, therefore, that

students do their best on those tests. On testing days, please make sure your student attends school, gets a good night's rest, and has a healthy breakfast.

Test results for both the CSTs and the CAT/6 Survey will be sent to each student's home address on one STAR Student Report within 20 days after the school district receives the reports. The CAPA, STS, or Aprenda 3 results will each be sent in a separate report. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and the student's teacher(s). Please keep these reports for use when talking to teacher(s) about ways to support your student's learning.

The following 2007 STAR Program testing and makeup dates for our school district are listed below:

School District Testing Dates	School District Makeup Dates	2007 STAR Program Tests
		California Standards Tests (CSTs) California Writing Standards Tests* □ California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

Contact **(insert local contact information)** during regular school hours if you have questions about the STAR Program or the testing schedule.

*These writing tests are part of CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven.

Sample Administrator's Letter Before STAR Program Testing Begins For English Learners

Dear Parents or Guardians:

This spring, your student, along with all California public school students in grades two through eleven, will take the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. All English learners, including your student, must take the STAR Program tests that are administered in English. These tests include the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey). The CAT/6 Survey is given in grades three and seven only.

In addition, state law requires all Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven to take a designated primary language test if (1) they have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months or (2) they receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States). If your student is eligible for a designated test in Spanish, he or she will take one of the following two tests:

- English learners in grades two, three, and four take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS).
- English learners in grades five through eleven take the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3).

English learners who speak a primary language other than Spanish will not participate in a designated language test.

Results of the STAR Program tests provide important information about how well your student is learning at our school. To help your student do his or her best on testing day, please make sure your student attends school, gets a good night's rest, and has a healthy breakfast.

Your student's results on the STS or Aprenda 3 will be sent to your home address in a report that is separate from the report for other STAR Program tests. Student test results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and the student's teacher(s).

Please keep these test reports for use when talking with the teacher(s) about ways to support your student's academic progress.

The 2007 STAR Program tests for all students (including English learners) will be given by our school district on the following dates:

School District Testing Dates	School District Makeup Dates	2007 STAR Program Tests
		California Standards Tests (CSTs) California Writing Standards Tests* <input type="checkbox"/> California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

Contact **(insert local contact information)** during regular school hours if you have questions about the STS, Aprenda 3, the STAR Program, or the testing schedule.

*These writing tests are part of CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven.

Sample Administrator's Letter Before STAR Program Testing Begins For Students Taking the CAPA

Dear Parents or Guardians:

This spring your student, along with public school students throughout California, will participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which measures how well students are achieving California content standards. Federal law requires that all students participate in this mandated testing program.

Your student's individualized education program (IEP) specifies that he or she will participate in the STAR Program by taking the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The CAPA is a test that is specifically designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The STAR Program provides valuable information about your student's academic achievement. It is important, therefore, that students do their best. On testing days, please make sure your student attends school, gets a good night's rest, and has a healthy breakfast.

Test results for the CAPA will be sent to your home address on the STAR Student Report for CAPA. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and the student's teacher(s). Please plan to keep these reports for use when talking to teacher(s) about ways to support your student's academic progress.

Contact **(insert local contact information)** during regular school hours if you have questions about the CAPA or the testing schedule.

The CAPA testing dates for the 2007 STAR Program for our school district are **(insert dates)**.

STAR 2007 Program-at-a-Glance

Elementary School: Grades Two Through Five

	CSTs	CAPA	CAT/6 Survey	STS	Aprenda 3
Name	California Standards Tests	California Alternate Performance Assessment	California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey	Standards-based Tests in Spanish	Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición
Students Tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades two through five 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades two through five with significant cognitive disabilities who are not able to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications Participation must be specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grade three 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two, three, and four who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish-speaking English learners in grade five who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics Science (grade five) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics Science, field test (grade five) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Language Spelling Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading-language arts Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Language Spelling Mathematics
Language	English	English	English	Spanish	Spanish
Content Focus	California content standards	Selected California content standards	General academic knowledge	California content standards	General academic knowledge
School District Testing Dates					
School District Makeup Dates					

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STAR 2007 Program-at-a-Glance

Middle School: Grades Six Through Eight

	CSTs	CAPA	CAT/6 Survey	Aprenda 3
Name	California Standards Tests	California Alternate Performance Assessment	California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)	Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición
Students Tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades six through eight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades six through eight with significant cognitive disabilities who are not able to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications Participation must be specified in the individualized education program (IEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grade seven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish-speaking English learners in grades six through eight who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics History-social science (grade eight) Science (grade eight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics Science, field test (grade eight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Language Spelling Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Language Spelling Mathematics
Language	English	English	English	Spanish
Content Focus	California content standards	Selected California content standards	General academic knowledge	General academic knowledge
School District Testing Dates				
School District Makeup Dates				

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STAR 2007 Program-at-a-Glance

High School: Grades Nine Through Eleven

	CSTs	CAPA	Aprenda 3
Name	California Standards Tests	California Alternate Performance Assessment	Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición
Students Tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades nine through eleven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades nine through eleven with significant cognitive disabilities who are not able to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications Participation must be specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish-speaking English learners in grades nine through eleven who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics (end-of-course) Science (end-of-course) Life Science (grade ten) History-social science (end-of-course) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-language arts Mathematics Science, field test (grade ten) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Language Mathematics
Language	English	English	Spanish
Content Focus	California content standards	Selected California content standards	General academic knowledge
School District Testing Dates			
School District Makeup Dates			

California Department of Education – February 2007

Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms for Assessment and Accountability

API — Academic Performance Index

The API is a state requirement under the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999. The API is a single number that ranges from 200 to 1000 and indicates how well a school performs academically from year to year. A complete explanation of all API criteria is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>.

AYP — Adequate Yearly Progress

AYP is a requirement under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Under the NCLB criteria, schools and local educational agencies (i.e., school districts, county offices of education, and independent charters) must annually meet or exceed specified criteria in order to make AYP. A complete explanation of all AYP criteria is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/>.

Apr enda 3 — Apr enda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición

A designated primary language test for the STAR Program, the Apr enda 3 is a norm-referenced achievement test series in Spanish for Spanish-speaking English learners in grades five through eleven (in 2007). The tests measure the achievement of general academic knowledge in reading, language, spelling, and mathematics in Spanish. The scores reported compare each student's score to the scores of a national sample of Spanish-speaking English learners.

CAT/6 Survey — California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey

The CAT/6 Survey, administered in grades three and seven only, is a set of nationally norm-referenced tests that measure the achievement of general academic knowledge and provide national comparisons.

CAPA — California Alternate Performance Assessment

The CAPA is an alternate test, aligned to selected state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics, that is given to students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications.

CDE — California Department of Education

The CDE provides leadership, assistance, oversight, and resources to local education agencies to create a dynamic, world-class education system that equips all students with the knowledge and skills to meet world-class standards and excel in college and careers. Directing the CDE is the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), who is elected statewide.

CAHSEE — California High School Exit Examination

The CAHSEE, authorized by state law, is a standards-based test in English-language arts and mathematics that students must pass in order to receive a high school diploma.

CRL — California Reading List

The CRL is a Web-based tool that allows students and their teachers and parents or guardians to access a list of book titles organized by levels of difficulty. The CRL number found on each student's report is based on results of the CST in English-language arts.

CSTs — California Standards Tests

The CSTs are the primary component of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. These tests were developed exclusively for California's public schools to determine how well students are achieving state-adopted content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science.

SBE — California State Board of Education

Authorized by law, the SBE is the governing and policy-making body of the California Department of Education. The SBE sets education policy for kindergarten through grade twelve in the areas of standards, instructional materials, assessment, and accountability. The SBE adopts textbooks for grades kindergarten through grade eight, adopts regulations to implement legislation, and has the authority to grant waivers of the *Education Code*. The SBE has 11 members, appointed by the Governor.

CSU — California State University

Authorized by law, the CSU is one of two public university systems in the state. The other system is the University of California. The CSU system includes 25 campuses located throughout California and the California Maritime Academy.

DPLT — Designated Primary Language Test

The DPLTs, designated by the SBE, are achievement tests in reading-language arts and mathematics that are given in Spanish to eligible Spanish-speaking English learners.

EAP — Early Assessment Program

The EAP, aligned to required competencies of incoming college freshmen and state content standards for kindergarten through grade twelve, may be taken by grade eleven students to earn an exemption from CSU-required English and/or mathematics placement tests or to determine additional coursework needed to prepare for college-level courses.

EPT — English Placement Test

The EPT is the English placement test for the California State University system.

ELM — Entry Level Mathematics

The ELM is the mathematics placement test for the California State University system.

IEP — Individualized Education Program

Required by law, the IEP is a specific education plan that is developed by a school's IEP team, including the parents and guardians, for every student with disabilities.

NCLB — No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is a federal law enacted in January 2002 that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It mandates that all students (including students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency) in all grades meet the state academic content standards for proficiency in English-language arts and mathematics by 2014. Schools must demonstrate “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) toward achieving that goal.

PSAA — Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999

The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 established California's state accountability system. Its primary goal is to help schools improve the academic achievement of all students. The cornerstone of the PSAA is the Academic Performance Index that measures the academic growth of schools each year and sets annual targets for that growth.

STAR — Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

Authorized by law until 2011, the STAR Program is administered annually to measure how well California public school students in grades two through eleven are learning the knowledge and skills of the state content standards for English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science. The STAR Program for 2007 has five components:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs)
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)
- Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

STS — Standards-based Tests in Spanish

A designated primary language test for the STAR Program, The STS are achievement tests in Spanish for English learners in grades two, three, and four (beginning in 2007). These tests are aligned to state content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics.